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NAVAL APPROPRIATION BILL.

Cuba and Spain—War and Peace.

SPEECH

OF

HON. HARRY SKINNER,

OF NORTH CAROLINA,

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Thursday, March 24, 1898.

The House being in Committee of the Whole on the State of the Union, and having under consideration the bill (H. R. 9658) making appropriations for the naval service for the fiscal year 1898-99.

Mr. MEYER of Louisiana. Mr. Chairman, I now yield to the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. SKINNER].

Mr. SKINNER. Mr. Chairman, the provision for our Navy in this crisis of our history is of international importance and of universal interest, as it carries with it, as it should, extraordinary provisions and authority.

Standing as we do on an isthmus connecting the dead and unborn—the fathers of our liberty who have gone before us and the sons that are to come after us, in joy or sorrow—we should in this serious crisis pause and dedicate our hearts to our country, to humanity, and to liberty, and our minds to sacred, sober contemplations on our duty to ourselves, to the human family, and to that Being who stood by our fathers in the great day of their fiery trial and by whom we will be held accountable for the manner in which we shall direct and deliver the responsible trust which in His inscrutable wisdom has been imposed upon us.

Mr. Chairman, the brow of civilization at this hour of the world's history seems to be wrinkled with the frowns of war. Not an instant of time within four centuries can be recalled when the rumors of war so simultaneously and universally reverberated.

No great war in actual progress, but preparations for war everywhere. Japan has voted in preparation for war her yen; Russia her rubles, England her pounds sterling, the United States her dollars, and Spain has hawked her depreciated credit on every market to obtain the means and sinews of war.

There is war in Cuba, and we should have made this declaration of truth to the world long ago and had the powers of the earth to know and feel with absolute certainty that this country by inspiration, inheritance, and obligation is the ally, guardian, and protector of suffering humanity and liberty, certainly on this continent. There is preparation for war between this country and Spain. All Europe is growling at each other over a division of the Chinese spoils. Japan is rushing her military forces to her Pacific coast, England is fighting Mahdi in Central Africa and her rebellious tribes in North India. In South America Argen-

tina is preparing for a conflict with Chile, and in Crete the conditions of Moslems and Christians are anything but quiet.

The spirit of apprehension and preparation covers and encircles the globe. And if these great powers, by design or complication, shall be drawn into active hostile engagements, with the modern improved destructive implements of warfare, no man can foretell the end, the result, or the consequences.

War is our business, but to whom is given
To die or triumph? That determine Heaven.

The face of the whole civilized world may be changed.

All our accumulated and inherited wealth of letters, learning, history, science, ingenuity, genius, invention, discovery, progress, civilization, and light here and to the eternal shores may be lost or relegated to a dark age for centuries. Who can foresee, who can foretell? Or the very preparation and appearance of war may solve the great problems of the age, by emancipating nations and men from dependence upon and servitude to the sordid metals and making them more reliant upon their own credit and resources, relegating this relic of barbarism to the realm of commodities, and establishing an equitable basis of distribution for all human national and international transactions, and ushering in the twentieth century with the United States of the World formulated upon that sound and solemn and sacred compact which will be approved on earth and ratified in heaven?

"Nation shall lift no sword against nation. Neither shall they learn war any more."

When learning and art, and especially religion, shall weave ties that shall make war fratricide.

Mr. Chairman, under these conditions it may be statesmanship, consummate diplomacy, and wise patriotism and prophetic caution to prepare for the seeming conflict, with the reserved, patriotic, and Christian hope that the very preparation may avert war and command peace. Prepare wisely, abundantly, with deliberation for defense, yea for aggression, when involving suffering humanity on this continent or kindling the torches of liberty in Cuba, until her shores shall be a continuous circle of light, creating that beautiful circlet in the South Atlantic, that shall increase in size as it broadens, until it bears in the music of its waves this joyous news to every shore of civilization.

War, grim-visaged and destructive, is a relic of barbarism, and should be avoided, if possible, in the interest of Christian peace and civilization and their benign blessings. The brave, honorable Americans and the valuable sinews that we would have to employ and sacrifice in destructive war we need to husband and employ in fighting the battles of peace, whose victories are as renowned as those of war.

We need employ them to bring more comforts to American homes, in enlightening the minds, Christianizing the hearts, and bettering the condition of American masses. We need employ them in still further developing and enriching our already marvelously great country, in extending our commerce on land and sea, in constructing our great inland waterways, in building the Nicaragua Canal, connecting us with the Orient, and other great projects made possible by American genius and enterprise. Desirable as all of these may be and are, yet, if need be, we would make one and all of them a willing sacrifice upon the altar of starving humanity and liberty.

Mr. Chairman, it would seem in this day of light and Christian reason that all international differences could and should be arbitrated. If our quarrel, so just, as we know and feel it to be, was with any other nation in the world, we might indulge the hope for a peaceful settlement, giving adequate actual indemnity for the *Maine*, immediate and substantial relief to the starving Cubans and independence to Cuba upon just and honorable terms. But a history of the rise and fall of Spain, with her invariable record of cruelty, of persecution, of bigotry, of tyranny, of hostility to every sentiment of human freedom, common justice, and enlightenment, forbids us to indulge in the hope of this happy solution. The slavery to which Spain doomed its subjects in the Western Hemisphere was not more cruel than its oppression of the people of Holland or its tyranny over its own people at home.

After all, it may be Divine design and retributive justice that has brought this proud, tyrannical, long-sinning nation to judgment, to confront the Republic of liberty, equality, justice, and civilization, where the wage, the issue, is the triumph of justice, truth, liberty, humanity.

With the God of these attributes and the Father of nations to direct our councils in peace and our armies and navies in war, we should not, we do not, fear the result.

Mr. Chairman, I am a great believer in retributive justice and providential intervention where the welfare of the human family is involved.

I was born in a land cursed with a system of slavery, which was antagonistic to the spirit and letter of our Constitution and institutions; and when we refused to surrender it peacefully, in my early youth I witnessed it wiped away by an issue of fire and blood, and I have lived, although a personal sufferer, to thank God and to regard the result as a blessing in disguise, making our country stronger, richer, and more hopeful and happier.

I read that in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries oppressions fell upon and tyranny reigned over the people of Europe, and the oppressed fled from tyranny. They were providentially guided to a home and refuge then beyond the sunset. Their first work was to dedicate this country to God and liberty. They felled the forest and builded the country. The earth responded to their labors and the population multiplied.

But with the development of the country was also developed the sturdy spirit of independence, and when oppression came the spirit of '76 created the formal Declaration of Independence, to my mind and heart on the brightest day that ever beamed upon the moral world. This declaration and its emblem cheered the half-clad and half-fed heroes at Valley Forge, waved over the redoubts on Bunker Hill, floated from the masthead of the *Bon Homme Richard*, kissed the breezes of victory on the waters of Erie and Champlain, and waved in triumph over the army of Wellington on the immortal field of Chippewa, and Cornwallis at Yorktown, tearing liberty's ensign from the British lion.

We read in sacred history that when heavy oppression fell upon the children of Israel, when they were compelled "to make brick without straw," that a leader was raised up for them. They were given a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. The sea was caused to open and they pass as upon dry land, and the waters to recede and destroy their pursuing oppressors. They were given a law of government from amid the lightnings of Sinai. When they were hungry the heavens issued bread, and

when thirsty the rocks issued water. The same Providence, in his own time and way, cares for the starving Cubans. He has given this country to them as their promised land, and these people as their guardians, defenders, and protectors; and this has been brought about in a way that we would not shrink from the obligation and responsibility, if we could, and we could not, with respect, if we would.

Mr. Chairman, in this solemn, serious, and anxious moment the American in the White House should, as he does, command our unqualified sympathy, confidence, and approval. Divided as we may be politically, racially, or sectionally, at the water's edge we are one, and our unity is represented by that emblem; and our President and Commander-in-Chief—his policy shall be our policy, his settlement or action shall be ours also.

He has carried with him to prayer, to church, to private and official relation in life the secrets and responsibilities of the crisis. He has demeaned himself with Christian patience, fortitude, and consummate statesmanship, so as to receive the approval of his people and the respect and admiration of the civilized world. We can trust him to develop his own policy; that policy we are sure will be a humane, liberty-loving, broad American policy, such as all Christendom will applaud and approve.

Post-Office Appropriation Bill—Fast-Mail Subsidy.

SPEECH
OF
HON. HARRY SKINNER,
OF NORTH CAROLINA,
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Saturday, March 19, 1898.

The House being in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, and having under consideration the bill (H. R. 3898) making appropriations for the service of the Post-Office Department for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1899—

Mr. BROMWELL. I yield five minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. SKINNER].

Mr. SKINNER. I am tempted by this special privilege and the environments of the moment to address myself briefly to the amendment and subject-matter under consideration.

In entering my modest and humble protest against this un-called-for, unwarranted, and needless subsidy (I think I employ the right word, for in pure, simple, plain English it is nothing else), I desire it understood that I harbor no prejudice or malice against railroad corporations.

I realize that they have been and are great promoters of the progress which is characteristic of the age, and are the great instruments that daily develop and unfold the wonderful and boundless resources of our country. It is true that I entertain decided convictions upon the great transportation question. My convic-

tions are reflected and symbolized in the Ocala and St. Louis declarations, the Omaha and St. Louis platforms.

Notwithstanding these, so long as the Government farms out transportation to corporations, I believe these corporations, whether it be the widow's mite, the laborer's savings, or the millionaire's investment, are one and all entitled to the protection of the law, to justice from the bench, from the jury box, and in legislative halls. They are entitled to be dealt with fairly and honorably in all things, and they should be required to deal honestly and fairly with the people and the Government.

Mr. Chairman, railroads should charge the Government no more nor less than they would charge anyone else for the same matter, and there ought to be some practicable manner to adjust this matter. I think the entire subject of transporting the mails can be very materially simplified in the interest of the service and of economy by letting the Government own its own mail cars and paying the railroads trackage and fully empowering the Post-Office Department to fix schedules.

In this way the mails can be transported north, south, east, and west upon such schedules as the Post-Office Department may fix, with such extra facilities as may be deemed advisable, without extra pay, without subsidies, and with a large net saving to the Department. This extra pay which goes to railroads and to the impractical project of free country delivery could be expended with very great profit and usefulness in experimenting in connecting the post-offices together by telephones and telegraphs. This experiment, in my judgment, would result in attaching the telegraph and the telephone as a permanent fixture to the Post-Office Department of the Government. This is a progressive reform in the postal service that should command the attention of the Post-Office and Post-Roads Committee.

I am somewhat surprised that Bryan Chicago platform Democrats should support such a subsidy. Their platform, if it means anything, or if not builded simply to get in on, stands against trusts, monopolies, and subsidies of all kinds, and yet Democrats professing allegiance to Bryan and this platform are here supporting this subsidy, and thereby filling the coffers of Pierpont Morgan & Co. and strengthening the arms of these several corporations receiving this benefit to fight and defeat your efforts in 1900.

Mr. BLAND. I should like to know on what ground the gentleman bases that statement?

Mr. SKINNER. I have only five minutes in which to discuss this question, and I am satisfied the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. BLAND] will agree with me, for throughout his entire life he has always stood for the right, and he is one that accepted the Chicago platform in good faith, and he will live up to it by voting against this subsidy.

Mr. OGDEN. And he will do so in this case.

Mr. SKINNER. Mr. Chairman, let us grant for the sake of the argument that this subsidy will expedite or facilitate Southern mails—all of which I deny—still I am at a loss to know how that class of Democrats who believe in equal rights to all and special privileges to none can vote for and champion this special privilege. "Consistency, thou art a jewel."

Such action as supporting subsidies, when you politically declare against them, is what discredits Democracy in the estimation of the people, and leads them to give credence to the hustings charge

that they build platforms to get in on, and when in invariably break them.

Mr. Chairman, from my own standpoint I could excuse gentlemen who support this appropriation if they could show wherein it is of any service or of any value to the South. I love the South so well I would be tempted to vote for the appropriation myself if I could be convinced that it was of any benefit to the Southern people or to any community thereof.

But the more I investigate the subject, the more light that is turned on, the clearer it appears to me to be an absolute bonus and gift, without any return benefits. Mr. James E. White, general railway superintendent, under date of February 4, 1898, says, in a letter addressed to the Hon. A. C. SHUFORD, "that the Southern Railway, which is paid from this appropriation for extra facilities, has not put on an extra train nor has it changed its schedule by reason of such appropriation. The train schedule of this line was practically the same before the appropriation was made as it has been since."

I am informed that the Atlantic Coast Line is giving a better and quicker schedule to-day than it gave while it enjoyed this subsidy, and that the Seaboard system gives practically as good a schedule, and I believe that if this appropriation was to fail to-day the Southern Railway would maintain its present schedule. With the two competitors, the Atlantic Coast Line and the Seaboard, in the field, they would be compelled to do so from the high principle of self-preservation.

This extra pay is all wrong and should be stopped. The Post-Office Department should have ample power to fix schedules for all trains carrying mail, and if any community stands in need of extra facilities they should make application to the Department to make schedules to accommodate them, and not come to Congress and ask for special and extra pay therefor. The South is entitled to good mail facilities. So is the North, East, and West. The Government pays enough to secure them without extra pay; and any section that is not served satisfactorily, let them press the matter properly through the Department and not here. The Postmaster-General says that this extra allowance is unnecessary and embarrassing to the service. We will do well to follow his advice.

[Here the hammer fell.]

Mr. OGDEN. I should like to ask the gentleman a question.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. PEARSON). The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. OGDEN. Was the gentleman ever farther South than North Carolina?

Mr. SKINNER. Oh, yes; I have been away down South.

Mr. OGDEN. I do not think the gentleman can claim the privilege of speaking for the South.

Mr. SKINNER. I should like to have two minutes more.

Mr. BROMWELL. I am afraid I can not give the gentleman further time without depriving other gentlemen of the time I have promised them.

Mr. SKINNER. I wanted to develop a certain state of facts—

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from North Carolina will have to yield the floor under the rule.

Mr. SKINNER. Certainly I will yield.

Mr. SWANSON. I yield the remainder of my time to the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. PEARSON].

Mr. PEARSON. Mr. Chairman, I should not have taxed the patience of the House at this time but for the singular and erroneous statement of the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. FLEMING]. I desire to say that I have very high respect for the gentleman from Georgia, because in almost all cases he votes right—that is to say, against his party, the Democratic party. But he is making a singular error of fact in the quotation here from these schedules, and I will say that in point of fact and argument he has fortified and confirmed the position which we occupy.

Let me say to the gentleman from Georgia, who lives in the beautiful city of Augusta, that that city had the advantage before 1893 of this same form of expedition of mails, because the mail was carried to his city by the Atlantic Coast Line. He says they got their mails earlier then than now, or earlier by that line than this, and it was for the very reason that that appropriation went to the Atlantic Coast Line before 1893 and now goes to what is called the Southern Railway.

Mr. FLEMING. The gentleman is mistaken. My statement was that the Southern Railway itself takes fifty minutes longer to run from New York to Augusta than it did in 1893.

Mr. PEARSON. The gentleman is usually very clearheaded, but he does not catch this point, that both he and his city are off the main line of the Southern Railway, and consequently off the main artery of transportation between New York and New Orleans.

Mr. FLEMING. The Southern Railway runs a car clear into the city of Augusta.

Mr. PEARSON. And it is on the natural line of distribution of the Atlantic Coast Line.

Mr. FLEMING. The Atlantic Coast Line does not touch there at all.

Mr. PEARSON. The gentleman realizes that in this limited time one of us must have the floor and the other, at least if he will not listen, must yield the floor. Now, I desire to say this to my friends on this side of the aisle—

Mr. SKINNER. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield to me for a question?

Mr. PEARSON. I decline to yield to a man who favored this appropriation two years ago and now is opposing the same appropriation.

Mr. SKINNER. I do not understand the gentleman.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman declines to yield.

Mr. SKINNER. Mr. Chairman—

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman will take his seat.

Mr. SKINNER. Yes; I do so. My purpose is always to be in order.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. PRANSON] has the floor.

Mr. SKINNER. Mr. Chairman, having taken my seat, at the same time I rise again, so I may understand the gentleman from North Carolina. A simple question may prevent a misunderstanding.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman will take his seat.

Mr. SKINNER. Mr. Chairman, I take my seat, and yet I would like the privilege of asking the gentleman a question.



The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. SKINNER] is out of order.

Mr. SKINNER. Mr. Chairman, I rise to a point of order.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman will take his seat or the Clerk will have to appeal to the Speaker of the House.

Mr. SKINNER. I have taken my seat. I have no desire to violate the rules of the House, and now I rise to a point of order.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman will state it.

Mr. SKINNER. That is, whether I have not the right to ask the gentleman from North Carolina whether he will permit me to ask him a question?

The CHAIRMAN. That is not a point of order. The gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. PEARSON] declines to be interrupted. The gentleman will take his seat.

Mr. PEARSON. I have already stated that I could not yield to a gentleman who seems to have changed his opinion without any apparent reason upon this same proposition, which has been here in one form or another for eighteen years, a proposition which I understand has heretofore had the support of the gentleman.

Mr. SKINNER. Now, Mr. Chairman, I appeal to the gentleman. I know he does not intentionally desire to misrepresent me.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman will confine himself to the question.

Mr. SKINNER. I hope the gentleman from North Carolina will allow me to make a statement.

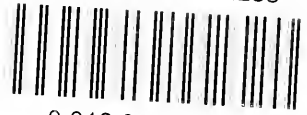
Mr. PEARSON. I will do the gentleman the justice to give him the balance of my time—all of it—if he wishes to dispute any statement of fact that I have made.

Mr. SKINNER. I want to say that I have never supported this measure in spirit or letter, and have always opposed it as an absolute robbery of the Treasury and not in the interest of the South.

Mr. PEARSON. If I have misstated the gentleman's position, I regret it, but I know the impression has generally prevailed that the gentleman had heretofore favored this same identical appropriation. Certainly he has never antagonized it.

Mr. SKINNER. I opposed it, Mr. Chairman, when the Atlantic Coast Line had it. I oppose it now. The Atlantic Coast Line gives the same or a better service to the country to-day than it gave when it had the subsidy, and I want to say here and now that the Southern Railroad would give the same service to the people if it did not have it. The law of competition, the law of self-preservation, would prompt it to do so. [Applause on the Democratic side.]

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